

The population growth in Pakistan can erupt like an atom bomb? Comment.

Introduction:

The population of Pakistan is increasing at an exponential rate and becoming a hurdle for the development of Pakistan in all the sectors of the economy and society. Pakistan is estimated to have a population of 40231.4 million currently since 2021, and will be on the top of 403 million in the year of 2050. Unfortunately, no government has taken this issue seriously. People are unaware of the importance of family planning and the majority of religious scholars view birth control policies as "un-Islamic." Population explosion is creating many issues like scarcity of fresh water and other natural resources. Poor people with large families are unable to maintain a good standard of living. Moreover, environmental problems are also triggered by population explosion. Government, private sectors and the masses with fewer children raising awareness among people especially women, and convincing religious scholars to play a positive role can be some of the policy measures which can decrease the expected population bomb to some

Some extent.

Exponential population growth in Pakistan.

Population growth situation in Pakistan is deteriorating rapidly. According to the census of 1988, the population of Pakistan was 132 million and the last census of 2017, showed a population of 208 million. Currently Pakistan's population is on the peak about 231.4 million in the year of 2021, Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in world with a population of 231.4 million and an annual growth rate of 2.4 percent per annum and an average of four to five million children are added to the existing numbers every year. The population of Pakistan had doubled in the last 30 years as apposed to other south Asian countries where the population doubles after every sixty years.

Future population of Pakistan.

Keep in view the current rate of population increase, the population of Pakistan will be 403 million in coming years of 2050. Thus the population bomb of Pakistan has exploded and it has far-reaching consequences for

for the socio-economic development and welfare of the people.

"Our water resources are depleting, but our mouths [to feed] are increasing".

(Miran Sadiq) Visar Former Chief Justice Pakistan)

Causes of population explosion:

Failure of leadership:

Unfortunately the leadership of Pakistan has never given importance to this issues. There are no clear strategy on how to deal with the exponential population growth that continues to have a destabilizing effect on our society in the National Security Policy (NSP) of Pakistan. Today, where we stand in terms of population, we have to focus on primary education and basic health because these two keeps a population from growing astronomically" (Imran Khan)

Lack of awareness and education in the masses:

The majority of people are unaware of family planning and reproductive health services

for children. The trend of using condoms or contraceptive pills for birth control is rare. Instead women are prefer abortions or other risky methods to terminate pregnancies. According to a

report 48% of pregnancies in Pakistan are unintended of which 54% are terminated in an unsafe way.

Influence of right-wing religious scholars
Most right wing religious scholars regard family planning or any birth control measure as un-Islamic due to which people find themselves in dilemma and decision of birth control becomes tough for them.

Effect of population explosion

Food insecurity / lack of food:

Despite having developed the agricultural sector and bumper crops, the government of Pakistan had imported four ~~months~~ million tons of wheat in 2020. Moreover Pakistan also imports, ghee, pulses and commodities to fulfill the basic requirement of the population.

Environmental hazards:

Uncontrol population growth is the main reason behind poor social indicators in Pakistan. Not surprisingly, Pakistan is ranked 154th in the Human Development Index (HDI) with close to 38 percent of the population living below the poverty

line in year 2000. The literacy rate remains dismally low at 58 percent. Pakistan has the world's second highest number of out-of-school children.

"Pakistan cannot progress if it can't check its rapid population growth" (Benazir Bhutto).

Poverty and Unemployment:

60 percent of the population of Pakistan is under the age of thirty. Such a high youth bulge and poor economic growths further increase the menace of poverty and unemployment.

Rise to Extremism and Militancy.

Illiteracy and poverty are among those factors which attract youth to Extremism and terrorism. Criminal activities are also an increase due to the large population. Deep root gender equality is directly linked to high population growth.

"If young people are unable to achieve their dreams their energies may be directed towards undesirable activities" Dr Farid Mithet

• **Drainage of resources:**

The rapidly increasing population is putting a huge drain on the resources of the country and would leave it struggling to provide for a rapidly increasing populace.

Way forward:

- offering incentives for families fewer children
The government must make an effective birth control policy and should encourage people to control birth rates by offering incentives for families with fewer children

"The choice we make today will affect the future of mankind" Benazir Bhutto

- Empowerment of women:

Education and empowered women can play a key role in keeping the population in control:

"Contraceptive use works as part of an enlightened and educated culture where women have some decision-making power.

"Dr Fareed Mithet."

- Promoting education and awareness in mass.

All forms of media electronic print, and social media should play a key role to make awareness campaigns for birth control and reproductive health.

"I dream of a Pakistan where every child conceived nurtured, loved, educated and supported" Benazir Bhutto.

Convincing scholars and clerics to play a positive role:

The government of Pakistan need to follow suit of neighboring Muslim countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Turkey where government and religious scholars coordinate to raise awareness among people for population control policies. Religious institutions and madrasas should come forward with other institutions to teach the importance of family planning to the largely uneducated masses of Pakistan.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell the population of Pakistan is increasing at an unprecedented rate. Lack of political will and strategy is the main reason for this increase. Uneducated people easily come under the influence of pseudo-religious scholars who advise them to increase their children regarding it as a religious obligation for them. The large population is putting serious threat to the food supply, and mineral and water resources of the country. Strict policy reforms and mass awareness campaign can play an important role to prevent the explosion of population bombs in Pakistan.